



NVAO • THE NETHERLANDS

## ASSESSMENT CONDITIONS

HBO-MASTER APPLIED  
SUSTAINABILITY MANAGEMENT

Stichting Global School for  
Entrepreneurship University of Applied  
Sciences

REPORT

18 September 2023



## 1 NVAO Procedure

NVAO takes a decision on the accreditation of a programme on the basis of a panel report. If the accreditation decision is conditionally positive NVAO sets a time limit of maximum two years for the programme to meet the conditions.

At the request of the institution of higher education a panel of independent experts will assess whether the conditions are met. The institution sends the advisory report to NVAO before the end of the term. The assessment should make clear that the programme meets the NVAO quality criteria.

The NVAO decision and the panel report are published on the agency's website.<sup>1</sup> There you can also find more information on NVAO and the assessment of conditions.

## 2 Panel

### Peer experts

- Drs. Nies Rijnders (chair), voormalig adviseur Praktijkgericht onderzoek en manager Expertisecentrum Sustainable Business bij Avans Hogeschool;
- Dr. Lonneke Roza PhD, Manager Community Investment bij NN Group en freelance coach Rotterdam School of Management;
- Dr. Gilbert Silvius MSc, MBA. Docent-onderzoeker Sustainability in Project Management bij de HU, LOI en Wittenborg;
- Marijn Nijssen MSc (student), student Science Business & Innovation aan de VU.

### Assisting staff

Jeroen van der Spek (secretary)

Yvonne Overdevest (NVAO policy advisor and process coordinator)

### Site visit

Haarlem, 30 maart 2023

## 3 Programme

### 3.1 General Data

<b>Institution</b>	Stichting Global School for Entrepreneurship University of Applied Sciences
<b>Programme</b>	M Applied Sustainability Management
<b>Modes of study</b>	Full Time and Part Time
<b>Degree</b>	Master of Science in Applied Sustainability Management
<b>Tracks</b>	Not applicable
<b>Location</b>	Haarlem
<b>Study load</b>	60 EC <sup>2</sup>
<b>Field of study</b>	Economics

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nvao.net/nl/besluiten>

<sup>2</sup> European Credits

### 3.2 NVAO Conditional Accreditation Decision

<b>Report</b>	30 March 2023
<b>Decision</b>	28 June 2023
<b>Term</b>	1 October 2023

## 4 Assessment of Conditions

### 4.1 Condition 1

Delineate research more clearly in the programme and ensure that students have sufficient time to develop research skills. The deadline for compliance is set at 1 October 2023.

#### **Judgement**

The condition is met.

#### **Findings, analysis and considerations**

On 30 March 2023, a panel of peer experts visited the intended HBO Master's programme Applied Sustainability Management at the Stichting Global School for Entrepreneurship University of Applied Sciences (GSE). The panel concluded that the GSE has developed a versatile programme that meets an important social need. However, the panel felt that the systematic teaching of research skills could potentially be stronger implemented in the programme. The panel therefore asked the GSE to place more emphasis on research methodology in the programme and to ensure that students have sufficient time to develop research skills.

In response to the panel's criticism, the programme team has made a number of changes to the course. The team has formulated four key pillars, which clarify the programme's vision on research. Students develop a research strategy based on an interdisciplinary approach, drawing on action-oriented research and applied research. Finally, the programme chooses to place the student at the heart of the research process: 'student-led research'.

Secondly, the GSE further developed and sharpened the methodological learning outcomes and learning objectives. Moreover, the programme team added additional elements and assignments on research to the existing modules. Finally, the GSE has developed an additional module Academic Writing & Research, in which students are taught the basics of qualitative, quantitative and action research.

This so-called Module 0 covers topics such as formulating research questions, selecting research methods, designing a research set-up, and analysing and interpreting data. The new module responds to the fact that students will start the programme with different research experiences. According to the programme team, this module can also contribute to developing a 'collaborative spirit' among the international group of students that is expected to participate in the Master's programme. The new module is compulsory for all students and will be evaluated by means of a term paper.

#### **Conclusion**

The panel believes that research methodology has been given more emphasis in the programme through the proposed changes. The programme's vision is clearly set out in four key pillars, which reflect well how students can use research in professional practice. The expanded learning outcomes and learning objectives are clear and the additions in the existing modules ensure that research is well embedded in the programme.

The panel believes that the Academic Writing & Research module provides students with a good foundation for developing research skills. The module is well structured in terms of content and provides

students with sufficient guidance to work independently with research later in the programme. Moreover, the additional module ensures that even students with little or no research experience can start the programme well-prepared.

The panel believes that the added components give students sufficient time to develop the required research skills. The panel does note that the addition of the new module has increased the study load. The programme team has chosen to allocate no extra credits to the module, instead making this component prior to the formal programme. This addition means that students will have four extra weeks of study. Part of this study load is compensated by the fact that students can start research-related assignments later in the programme better prepared. Moreover, the panel is confident that the programme design and guidance from the teaching team provide the necessary structure, keeping the overall programme manageable for students.

In summary, the panel is of the opinion that the proposed changes have embedded research more firmly in the programme. The methodological learning outcomes and the vision on research have been further elaborated and clarified. The additional module provides students with a good basis for further developing research skills, and ensures that students start the programme with the same level of knowledge.

#### 4.2 Final judgement

The panel concludes that the programme meets the conditions. The programme has properly addressed the shortcomings which were identified in the previous peer review. Therefore, the panel reaches a positive conclusion regarding the quality of the programme.

